6:India G-3 (1931)1933 AVI Kashmir
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B [564] D 564

(c) *Yashkuns*—The most numerous of the lot—come next in importance and form almost the entire population of Hunza, Nagar and Punial; they also outnumber all other classes in the rest of the Agency. They are of Turanian origin but intermarriage with people of Tartar and Aryan descent has obliterated most of their original characteristics.

(d) *Saiyids*—Who are thinly scattered through the Agency, declare that they first settled in the country when Tamerlane was king. They are greatly respected by all classes and receive the daughters of the ruling families in marriage. The daughter of a Saiyid usually can marry only in the same clan. Occasionally, however, they are married by kings and ruling chiefs, and also, in this district, by Akhuns and Mullahs.

B [564]

(e) *Kamins, Doms and Shotas*—They are of an inferior caste. The Kamins who do not exist in Hunza and Nagar are millers and potters and are most numerous in Darel and Chilas. The Doms who are musicians, blacksmiths and cobblers, are found mostly in Yasin, Nagar and Chilas. The Shotas are leather workers and exist only in Nagar.

(f) *Kashmiris*—Form the largest section of the population in Gilgit proper. They settled in the time of Ahmad Shah (about 1760) and are mostly weavers, goldsmiths and carpenters.

(g) *Gujjars*—Nomadic cattle owners form a floating population chiefly in the highlands separating Gilgit from the unadministered territory of Tangir and Darel.

D 105

3. A chief comes from the aristocrat class and usually marries only one wife from that class the children of the union being recognized as heirs, to the exclusion of children by a wife of an inferior class.

B 105

4. The organisation is autocratic in theory, in practice any important point is settled by a Jirga of headmen.

5. The origin of the tribes in the Gilgit Agency is conjectural. There would appear to have been three main movements—an incursion from the North as the inhabitants of Badakshan gradually expanded over the Hindu Kush; an invasion of the Shins from the South and the conquest by the Tartars from the East. There is also evidence that Tibet ruled in this part of the country for many generations.

Owing to the inaccessibility of the country, Hunza and Nagar seem to have been less affected by these movements than the rest of the Agency, and among the people living in the more isolated parts of these provinces, traces of Turanian descent can still be seen.

6. Most of the inhabitants are cultivators and all three types of cultivation are to be observed, depending entirely on the conformation of the ground. In hilly country terraced fields, often rivetted with stones, are the rule: where the country is open and flat ordinary plots are made.

Irrigation is carried out almost universally by water kuhls, some of which extend along the precipitous faces of the mountains for many miles. Where possible small canals are hewn out of the rock; where the hill is too steep the water is conducted through hollowed tree trunks which are propped by wooden supports.

7. There are no megalithic monuments in the Agency.

Two Budhist Stupas exist; one on the hillside about three miles east of Gilgit; the other on the road to Nagar, between Chalt and Minapin. There

is also a small Budha carved on the rocks at the mouth of the Kirgah Nulla, about three miles west of Gilgit and small Budhas and Budhist relics have been found in Yasin. D 105

8. Stone is not used for seats. B 105

9. Buildings are mostly constructed of mud and stone. In many of them the pillars supporting the roof, the lintels, friezes and wainscot are of carved wood.

There would appear to be no restrictions: the material used depending on the material available.

10. The social position of a man is indicated more by the condition of his clothes and house than by any particular cut or pattern.

11. The sun is considered to be masculine and to be composed of fire: the moon feminine, and made of glass.

The markings on the moon are accounted for as follows in Hunza and Punial:—

> A small girl went out one night to fetch water for her mother and saw the moon descending from the sky. Fearing that she would be carried away, she clutched a small tree but in spite of this precaution both she and the tree were swept up to the moon where they can still be seen. In the rest of the Agency the tree is omitted.

In an eclipse a large dragon swallows the sun or moon. Fortunately it has a slit in its throat so their eventual emergence from this is assured. Nevertheless to hasten matters drums are beaten and a great deal of noise is made.

The stars are thought to be basket shaped, to have no light of their own and to smell badly. The reason for this seems to be that a falling star (meteor) crashed into a field once long ago and had all these characteristics.

There are no specific names for any of the constellations.

Earthquakes are caused as follows:—

The theory more general is that a bull stands on the water supporting the the earth on one of his horns. When he itches he moves his body a little causing the earth to shake.

In certain parts of Hunza the theory is that at the centre of the earth a great bull stands and supports the ground on his immense horns. Should anyone sin greatly the bull shakes his head in remonstrance and the earth rocks.

The rainbow is supposed to be an animal which inhabits the clouds. Sometimes he comes down to drink at the river and the water he drinks is supposed to come out again at the other end.

12. The face of the dead is kept to the West. The head to the North and legs to the South. Both the hands *generally* are straight. In some parts of Hunza the right hand is placed under the cheek.

13. The ultimate abode of the righteous man is a land of comfort and good things. What he has desired in life he gets in abundance in death. There is no food there but the smell of the flowers which carpet the ground is enough.

For the bad man is a place of terror and misery. All kinds of tortures await him there; from fire, from insects, from knives. Toads and snakes abound and there he will remain until pardoned of God.

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105

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105

14. The complexion is, in most cases, very fair. Straight eyes, usually brown but not infrequently grey or even blue. The hair is straight, in some cases of a decidely reddish tinge and is often shaved over the pate.

The physique is good, although in many cases there is lack of stamina and a certain indolence, more mental than physical, is often observed.

The prowess of the locals on the mountains is remarkable and, probably unsurpassed elsewhere.

15. Seed is sown broadcast; fields are ploughed with a wooden plough.

16. Musical instruments are produced on any excuse and chiefs are invariably accompanied by their bands wherever they go. The most common instruments are the Sarnai; the Daramal which consists of a pair of drums on one of which the skin is tight and on the other loose, and a big drum.

In addition to these there is the Rubab and the Zitha stringed instruments which are played with remarkable skill and effect.

17. Swords, Guns and Rifles are the chief weapons, although bows and arrows still survive.

Heads are not taken from enemies.

PART "B".

In the Gilgit Agency there is little more contact with the outside world now than there was formerly and as, in the Political Areas, the Ruling Chiefs are encouraged to govern their own countries as much as possible without interference by the Political Agent, the effect of political dominance is not marked.

Education is carried out in all the larger centres, but it has been started so recently that it is impossible to tell at the moment, what its eventual effect will be.

In a land where ninety nine per cent. of the population is illiterate, where the threat of starvation is ever present, and where stark poverty is the universal rule, there is little chance of the inhabitants becoming slack and apathetic.

PART "C".

1. Ornaments of silver and semi-precious stones are worn but tattooing is not practised. The women apply certain drugs to their faces to protect the complexion against the rigour of the climate.

Tooth paste is not used and teeth are usually cleaned with a willow twig.

2. Wine, the only intoxicant indulged in, is drunk in Hunza, Punial, Ishkoman, Yasin and Kuh-Ghizr, where most of the inhabitants are Maulais. There are no general restrictions of age, sex, etc. but wine is usually produced only when entertaining guests, or at marriage ceremonies and occasions of rejoicing.

3. The people generally are very obedient and seldom defy the authority of their Chief unless there is any gross contravention of established custom. Various scales of fines are imposed in different districts and these are generally paid with good grace, as, in almost every case, they are imposed by the Chiefs in consultation with the elders of the country. Imprisonment is also awarded but excommunication is not observed.

4. Prayers are offered to God in the same manner as in other civilized places in India.

D 105

5. Agriculture forms the sole occupation of nearly all the inhabitants of the Agency. Trade has recently been started by a few of the more enterprising people but at the moment the numbers engaged in it are almost negligible.

B 105

6. A pregnant woman is given no special diet and the delivery is assisted by any old woman who may be selected to help. After the third day the mother's clothes are washed and on the 10th day she, herself, takes a bath and is considered clean again.

The baby is washed in hot water immediately after birth and a man calls "*Azan*" first in the right ear and then in the left—if the child is male guns are fired and the firers are given a goat.

Alms are given soon after birth and again three days later.

A male child is preferred though, as no record exist, it is impossible to say to which sex the first child generally belongs.

No ceremonies are performed when the child reaches puberty.

7. Girls are not generally offered free. In rare cases they are exchanged with other girls but never sold. Rs. 60 to 80 is usually offered for a girl at the time of betrothal or before marriage. Ornaments are given by the girl's parents only and not by the groom's family.

Woman has sole authority in household matters, does all the work in the house and when it is finished helps in the fields. In some districts she also fetches fuel from the jungle.

A priest, who may be any man with enough religious education, is necessary to read the *Nikah* at the marriage ceremony, and receives from the bridegroom Re. 1 as his fee.

Polygamy is practised but the status of the first wife is considerably lowered by the arrival of a second, as this is usually caused by her own incompetence in household matters or to greater attractiveness on the part of her rival.

Sometimes, however, a man marries his brother's widow under compulsion, and in that case the position of the first wife is not altered.

Betrothal is the usual prelude to marriage. It is performed in this manner:—

The boys father or in his absence, any other important relative or friend goes with 4 or 5 other influential persons to the house of the intended bride and asks her guardian for her hand. He replies that his relatives must be consulted and tells the deputation to come again after a few days. When the party again visits the house if the reply is favourable the girl's family is presented with the following articles:—

Cloth	...	about 6 yards.
Cash	...	„ Rs. 10

Should it be desired *Nikah* can be read at that time. Usually, however, it is reserved until the marriage takes place.

Unless the *Nikah* has been read the alliance can be broken by either side on any pretext. If the move for annulment comes from the girl's side the gifts are returned: If from the boys they are not recovered.

Divorce is allowed in cases where the women is unable to manage the household affairs or is of bad habits. Rarely a divorce takes place where the husband finds it impossible for him to cope with his wife. Divorced persons are permitted to remarry.

D 105 Marraiges are arranged for auspicious days and hours which are ascertained on each occasion from the village priest.

B 105 *Temporary unions* are allowed by Shias only.

Free access is not allowed before marriage generally.

No caste prohibits remarriages of widows. Moral laxity prevails to a certain extent.

8. *Death.*—The head of the dead points North but the face is turned to the West towards Mecca, the religious centre of Muslims. When a death occurs food is not cooked in that house for three days and cooked food is sent by relatives for that period. On the third, seventh and fortieth day alms are given to avert calamities, also on the first anniversary after the death.

Indigenous drugs are used for medicines and almost every one knows the medicinal properties of certain local plants and use them when required.

9. *Amusements.*—Swimming, polo playing, racing, wrestling, tug of war, arcery, dancing, singing, etc., are some of the amusements indulged in; women do not participate in the sport undertaken by men. They hold their own separate congregation on occasions of rejoicings such as Id and indulge in singing and dancing away from the eyes of the men.

Festival occasions.—Id-ul-Fittar, Id Haj, Id Ghadir and Nauroz are the chief occasions on which rejoicings are made by dancing, singing, polo playing, running and wrestling etc. Dancing is held in a circle to the beat of drum.

D 585 539 10. Before a number of the village people after sunset on the night before the marriage the following song is sung at the bridegroom's house in the following manners:—

B 585 539 A large iron pan is placed in the middle of the assembly and a man of the Katchate or Babuse family rushes forth with some ghee, atta, and seeds of wild rue or leaves of chili, and, putting these things into the pan burns a little fire under it till the contents begin to smoke. To fumigate all the air in the room he holds the pan by its brim and lifting his hands above his head, commences to dance to the accompaniment of the band, while the people applaud and sing a song of which the following is a translation:—

(1) The pan belongs to Bair Gul.

I will never let any one place this pan on the hearth.

I will place it there myself.

(2) The pan belongs to Malik, the Chief of Gilgit.

I will never let any other place this pan on the hearth.

I will place it there myself.

(3) The pan is worthy of belonging to kings, etc.

(4) The pan is worth being kept by a family, etc.

(5) The pan belongs to Shah Mir, the Chief of Kashmir, etc.

(6) The pan belongs to Maqpun, the Chief of Skardu, etc.

(7) The pan belongs to Mughlot, the Chief of Nagar, etc.